

Patent
S/N 09/944,055
Docket No. G08.004

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 4-7 and 21-24 are amended by this action. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate features recited in dependent claims 2 and 3 (which are hereby cancelled), and to clarify that the "active record" which is created upon verifying the document information is a record that is available for searching and retrieval by a user. For example, this feature is discussed in conjunction with FIG. 7 in the application as filed (e.g., as discussed at paragraph [0071] in the application as published). In some embodiments, a "pending" record is unavailable for searching and retrieval by a user operating a user device, while an "active" record is available for searching and retrieval by such a user. Claims 22-24 are amended in a similar fashion. Claim 21 is amended to recite that the record retrieved is an "active record" available for search and retrieval. Claims 4-7 are amended to reference claim 1 instead of canceled claim 2. No new matter is believed added by these amendments.

The Examiner has rejected claims 17-21 under 35 USC §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,457,018 (hereinafter, the "Rubin" patent), and has rejected claims 1-16 and 22-24 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Rubin in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,289,460 (hereinafter, the "Hajmiragha" patent). Applicants respectfully traverse each of these grounds of rejection. For Applicant's convenience, the substance of the §103(a) rejection will be addressed first.

Applicants respectfully assert that neither of the references, alone or in combination, teach or suggest a data storage method as recited by amended claims 1 or 22-24 (or claims depending therefrom). In particular, neither reference, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests a data storage method which includes receiving document information associated with a document, the document information including information identified by a template, or generating an active record if verifying document information is successful, where the active record is available for search and retrieval by a user.

Patent
S/N 09/944,055
Docket No. G08.004

The Rubin patent generally relates to an object oriented information retrieval framework mechanism. In general, documents are stored by the system as instances of an object oriented class which has document objects that contain text information or binary documents that contain a digital representation of information other than text (such as image data or audio data). The system provides an information retrieval system that can be adapted to new document types. (See Col. 2, lines 7-56). The Hajmiragha patent generally relates to a document management system which allows predesignated users at remotely located computer-based systems to perform document management. (See Abstract).

The Examiner (referring to claim 2 which is now incorporated into claim 1) asserts that Rubin teaches selecting a template based on a classification of a document, and cites Col. 20, lines 3-6. Applicants respectfully assert that the cited portion of Rubin does not teach or suggest a "template" as recited in the present claims (where document information entered is defined by the template). Instead, the "templates" referred to by the Examiner in the Rubin reference actually relate to object class templates. For example, the "InformationRetrievalSystem class" is "extensible as a template class for objects of its component classes and... as a template for other objects [to permit] different parsers, stoplights and word indexes to be used by the system." (See Col. 20, lines 1-16). These "templates" are not the same as the claimed "templates" (which are retrieved based on a classification of the document and which define the document information to be entered). Further, there is simply no teaching or suggestion in the Rubin reference to provide templates as recited in claim 1. At least for this reason, the Rubin reference fails to teach or suggest embodiments of the present invention as recited in amended claim 1.

The Rubin reference also fails to teach or suggest generating an active record if verifying document information is successful, where the active record is available for search and retrieval by a user. The Examiner agrees that Rubin "does not teach verifying the document information and if the verifying is successful." (See paper no. 7, page 5, lines 1-2). Because Rubin does not teach verifying the document information, it follows that Rubin also does not teach making the active record available for search and retrieval.

Patent
S/N 09/944,055
Docket No. G08.004

Applicants further note that the "annotation document" referred to by the Examiner in the Rubin reference is not a "pending record", but instead relates to a document that "comprises text that characterizes the binary document", thereby allowing text-based queries to be run against the annotation document (since text-based queries would not be able to be run against the binary document). That is, the "annotation document" is simply a text document associated with an image document. (See Col. 14, lines 60-68). The "annotation document" is not a "pending record" as recited in the instant claims.

The Examiner cites the Hajmiragha patent to make up for the deficiencies of the Rubin reference. Applicants respectfully assert that the Hajmiragha patent also fails to teach or suggest a data storage method which includes receiving document information associated with a document, the document information including information identified by a template, or generating an active record if verifying document information is successful, where the active record is available for search and retrieval by a user.

The Hajmiragha patent describes the use of "templates" but appears to utilize templates to control process flow (e.g., as described at Col. 5, lines 15-60, process flow includes three types, each having their own templates). Embodiments as recited in claim 1 identify templates based on a classification of a document and use the template to define information to be entered about the document.

Further, the Hajmiragha patent fails to teach or suggest generating an active record if verifying document information is successful, where the active record is available for search and retrieval by a user as recited in claim 1. The Examiner refers to the portion of Hajmiragha which discusses the use of "digital signatures" as providing the claimed feature of "verifying document information". Applicants respectfully assert that the digital signatures used by Hajmiragha are not used to "verify document information"; instead, the digital signatures are provided to provide an authentication of a source of the document or a party associated with the document. Authenticating a source is not the same as verifying document information. Embodiments allow a review and approval process to occur while a document is stored as a pending record. If the review and approval process is completed (that is, if "verifying document information is

Patent
S/N 09/944,055
Docket No. G08.004

successful"), the pending record is transformed into an active record that is then made available for search and retrieval by users. In this manner, embodiments ensure that only verified information is made available for search and retrieval. There is no teaching or suggestion of such features in the references cited by the Examiner, alone or in any combination.

Because neither Rubin nor Hajmiragha teach or suggest a data storage method which includes receiving document information associated with a document, the document information including information identified by a template, or generating an active record if verifying document information is successful, where the active record is available for search and retrieval by a user, embodiments as recited in claim 1 are believed patentable over the references, alone or in combination. Independent claims 22-24, similarly amended, are believed patentable for similar reasons. Further, dependent claims 4-16 are believed patentable at least as depending from a patentable base claim.

The Examiner rejected claim 17-21 under 35 USC §102(e) over the Rubin reference. Applicants respectfully assert that Rubin fails to teach or suggest a method for storing a document as recited in claim 17 as Rubin fails to teach or suggest adding a document record to a database if the document is not referenced in the record management system. The Examiner refers to col. 24, lines 56-61, col. 24 lines 14-18 and col. 14, lines 46-49 as teaching this feature. Applicants have reviewed the sections referenced by the Examiner and respectfully assert that the sections describe adding "document objects" to the system. The "document objects" which are added are not documents (as recited in claim 17), instead, they are object oriented programming objects which are used to define new document types as a system is being constructed. Embodiments of the present invention allow the addition of individual documents in a manner which efficiently determines whether the individual document has previously been added to the library. The portions of Rubin cited by the Examiner describe techniques for programming and creating a library system (not for adding actual documents to a library).

In addition, Rubin further fails to teach or suggest entering document data in a data entry template (where the template is selected based at least in part on a type of the document). As discussed above, the Rubin reference fails to teach or suggest the use of such templates.

Patent
S/N 09/944,055
Docket No. G08.004

Accordingly, because Rubin fails to teach or suggest a system which adds a record if the document is not referenced in the system, and because Rubin fails to teach or suggest a system which uses data entry templates (selected based at least in part on a type of the document), the Rubin reference fails to anticipate embodiments of the present invention as claimed in claim 17. Claims 18-20 are believed patentable at least as depending from claim 17.

Claim 21 has been amended to recite identifying an active record of a document management database containing the information, the active record including information having previously been approved and converted from a pending record. As discussed above, the Rubin reference fails to teach the use of "active" or "pending" records and therefore fails to anticipate claim 21 as amended.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully assert that each of the pending claims are patentable over the cited references, alone or in combination. Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. Applicants' silence with respect to other comments made in the Office Action does not imply agreement with those comments.

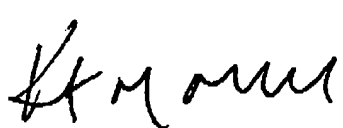
If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of the present application, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact Kurt M. Maschoff using the information provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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